

The
Word
A Quickening
W O R D

F O R

The hastening a Sluggish Soul to a
 seasonable Answer to

The Divine Call.

Published by a poor Sinner that
 found it such to him.

Being the last SERMON Preached in
 the First Church of *Boston*

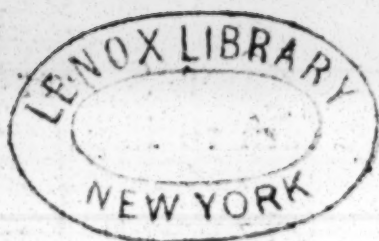
Upon *Isaiab 55. 6.*

By the Pastor there, on the 24th of
 the fifth Moneth, 1670.

C A M B R I D G E .

Printed by S. G. and M. 7 1670.

W O R D



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A Quickening Word

F O R

A Sluggish Soul.

ISAIAH 55. 6.

*Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call
ye upon him while he is near.*

THe Doctrine that this Text of-
fered to us, was this :

*If in seeking the Lord we would
not miss of success, we must
not miss the season thereof.*

We must not seek him at our own pleasure
or leisure, nor in our own loitering pace,
but if we would speed in seeking, we must
seek with speed, and in the time of his ap-
pointment, that time which he makes a
season.

*Reas. 1. We can never seek the Lord too
soon, but we may too late.*

*Reas. 2. It is fit God should appoint the
time of our seeking and finding, because*

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what he doth for us he doth freely, he gives as a *Dole*, and not payes as a *Debt*, and we receiving all of grace as Beggars, may not chuse. A rich man indeed that hath it by him, may eat when he hath a minde; but the poor man must eat when he can get it, and is glad to have his Alms at any time, the time that his good Master chuserh. And the Lord can best chuse the fittest time, because of his Infinite Wisdome, which is sufficient to silence the prattle and exceptions of foolish man.

U S E I. For Information.

1. We must therefore seek the Lord with desire, design, and hope of finding.

2. See we how cross we are to God, to set our season and convenience against Gods season; when he is at work, we are apt to put off, *Acts* 24. 25. He thinks another time may be better, but if you will not like of Gods time, it is not like that God should accept of yours.

3. See our need of divine Help to subdue our Understanding to his Wisdome, and our Will to his good Pleasure.

U S E II. For Direction, To give Aime
to know our finding time.

Rule 1. All times are not alike, indifferent or indefinite, and left to us to take

what

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what time we see good, but there is a limitation of time to Season or Opportunity, which is as the Eye of the Needle: it is the Market, which is not every day; the Market is indeed free, without price, but not without care: *Isa. 55. 1, 2. Hearken diligently.*

Rule 2. When God is near he may be found: and God is near (1) When grace is stirring, *2 Cor. 6. 1, 2. Joh. 5. 3.* and (2) When he sends his Messengers after us to call us, *2 Chron. 36. 15.* then there is some compassion ready: and (3) When he toucheth us with his Rod, we may lay hold of his hand, *Isa. 27. 5.* (4) When he enforceth, and gives an edge to the outward Call, *Mat. 21. 34. & 11. 12. & 3. no.* (5) When God removes Impediments, *Cant. 2. 10, 11, 12.* (6) When inward Calls second the outward, and the Spirit strives, *Cant. 5. 4.*

Rule 3. Before your space of Repentance is over, *Revel. 2. 21.* before the forty dayes ended, *Jonah 3. 4.*

Rule 4. Before the time of God's repenting and patience is over, *Jer. 15. 6.*

Rule 5. Before God hath put a barre on your Salvation, by Resolution, *Psal. 95. 11. or Executed. Eph. 2. 1, 2.*

Rule 6. There is no assurance of any

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time, but the present, 2 Cor. 6. 2. *Psal.* 95. 7.

USE III. For Exhortation.

Leave not this work to some spare time, to a rainy day (when nothing else to do) not to a sick bed, crazy Age, &c.

Motive 1. It is more easie to seek and finde seasonably, speedily: (1) When God is pleased in mercy to breathe by his Spirit, *Rom.* 9. 16. *Joh.* 3. 8. (2) The heart deceives when it delays, and pretends to morrow; to morrow never comes, as is seen in *Felix*, *Act.* 24. (3) By delays the heart is more hard. (4) The work to be done is more hard. (5) The more hard work to be done, the more weeds the more debt. (6) We are afterward more unable to do it; the weakest Beast should not have the heaviest burthen: and Satan and Sin do more strongly fortifie themselves.

Mot. 2. If we neglect to seek in good time that we may finde, an evil time seeks and findes us, after death, at death, yea in this life a man may be taken in an evil time when we are past seeking, or at least finding. You say, *To morrow is a new day*; but to morrow may be no day to thee.

No day of seeking really, *Luke* 19. 42. *Hos.* 4. 17. when God saith to all Means, all Prayers,

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Prayers, all Movings of the Spirit, *Let him alone.*

No day of finding, *Luke 14. 24.*

Mot. 3. Delay increaseth sin and suffering: You must buy that precious Pearl by the Inch of Candle, while Life and Season lasts; therefore you must not stand chaffering and dodging till the Market be over, but dispatch and bid like a Merchant, as one that hath a minde to buy.

Mot. 4. You have certain ground in the Text and elsewhere to seek the Lord in season, but you have no ground of delay; for this life, and what depends upon it, is uncertain; nothing of this life is certain, but the going out of it. You think you will seek the Lord when you are elder, free, recovered from such sickness or business, when you are a little settled, and have something about you, but Death may prevent all these, and strip you of all, and settle you in your long home: So that you have but shallow ground to delay your leaving your sins another time, for life may leave you first. You have certain promise if you hearken *to day*, *Psal. 95.*; but as for *to morrow*, who hath promised that? None but the Devil, and thy own Heart, who are notorious deceivers: In all other Affairs you are confined to Season,

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son, in Husbandry, Navigation, Provision for Winter, &c.

Mot. 5. The last Motive is, That if you seek not the Lord in season, but delay and put off, you sin very much against the Patience of God, the Dignity of God, and the Love and Kindness of God.

First, You sin against the Dignity of God, and that is the Jewel he will not part withall. That Soul that delayes to seek him in season, offends against the Honour of God two wayes:

1. He prefers other things before God,

2. He prefers himself before God.

The former of these hath been spoken to: *Mat. 22. 4.* there is the *Farm*, and the *Merchandise*, and though both of them honest and lawful Imployes, yet they become a snare unto the person that doth delay; his Vocation becomes an Avocation. Now weigh and consider what there can be in this world, that is worthy to be preferred before Jesus Christ: Why do you not accept of the Lord? This or that business stands in the way: And if lawful things become abominable when they stand in the way, how much more unlawfull? If his respect to his Wife should not hinder, much less his respect to his Harlot may
not hinder

hinder him; if his Trading, much more Cheating, Gaming, or Tipling.

Let thy own heart answer me, Is it not a great Indignity to the great God, that thou shouldst give the best of thy time; and the choice of thy strength and spirits to the World, and the Devil the god thereof, and assign onely the feeble wishes of thy withered Age to the true Lord of Heaven and Earth? To give the flower of your Wine to the Devil, and offer the Drags to Christ? To give thy full Dishes for Satan to feast on, and entertain the Lord with Fragments, Scraps and Crumbs from the Devils Table? And yet thou sayest, God is thy Father, and thy Lord: May not he say to thee? *If I be a Father, where is my honour? If I be a Master, where is my fear? Mat. 1. 6. 8.* Had you any respect for God, had you any awe of him, you durst not deal so with him; you durst not offer the blinde, the lame and the sick to your Governour, but ye make bold with him that rules your Rulers, and bring your blinde, and lame, and sickly years to him; your Eyes blinded with dust and lust, your strength lame in trudging and cludging for Satan; your whole man faint and sickly, such bearing the heat of the day in his work. Do not fashion to your selves such

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an Idoll of easie and soft kindness in God,
as to be put off with any thing: No, no,
he knows the honour that is due to his
Name, and claims and expects it; *The best*
of the Oyl, the best of the Wine, and of the
Wheat, the first-fruit of them are his, Numb.
18.12. nor any dregs of the Oyl, any re-
fuse of the Wheat, nor any prick'd Wine
will satisfie him. If ye count him not wor-
thy of the best and best, the worst and
latter will not be counted worthy of
him.

Furthermore, in delaying thou dost un-
mannerly set up thy self before the Lord,
who is as thou sayest, Thy Father, and thy
Lord. Is it not fit that the Childe should
wait on the Father, and the Servant on the
Master? How rude art thou to make him
wait on thee, especially considering that
thou hast need of him, and not he of thee?
He is thy Physician, and calls for thee now,
and wilt thou not take his time? Not onely
thy duty, but thy necessity should hasten
thee. *Genes. 41. 14. when Joseph was in*
Prison, Then Pharaoh sent and called Joseph,
and they brought him hastily out of the dan-
geon; the word in the Hebrew is, They made
him run: he said, not to take his leave of
his friends, but he runs. How many Messen-

sengers

messengers hath the King of Heaven sent to you, and you have delayed, *Shall I? Shall I?* yea, and when will that be? Some stirre not, and some do but creep. Joseph he waited till *the word came*, but now the Promise is about to be fulfilled, it is time for him to run now. Thou art in the dungeon and captivity of Sin and Satan, the King of Heaven he sends his Messengers to invite thee, and thou comest not; thou dost not know what thou mayest lose, if thou lovest but a little time. *John 11. 28. Martha calls Mary, and told her, The Master is come and calleth for thee: ver. 29. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him. ver. 31. The Jews then which were with her in the house, and comforted her, when they saw Mary that she rose up hastily, and went out, followed her, saying, She goeth to the grave, to weep there. v. 33. And when Jesus saw her weep, &c. Oh sayes Martha, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. How is my dear Lord come? then neither my Tears nor my Friends shall hinder me, but I'll go to him, for my Master calls. How often have Christ's Servants told you that your Master calls; he calls you that hath Power over you, that hath Grace for you, and will you reject that Love and Kindness?*

When

When the World calls you, Here is a Prize, here is a Purchase, here is a Bargain; how nimbly do men come then? So when the Flesh calls you, yet you owe nothing to the Flesh: And doth your Master call? all that you are and have, you are debtors to him for it, and will ye not come when he calls? There is another Instance in *Mark* 10. 46. *Blind Bartimeus* sat by the way-side begging, and cried out, *Lord Jesus thou Son of David, have mercy on me: and they charged him that he should hold his peace; but he cried so much the more.* Vers. 49. *Jesus stood still; and commanded him to be called; and he arose and came to Jesus. And Jesus stood still: What is the meaning of that? Christ would not go further and further from this poor man: And they said, Be of good comfort, arise, he calleth thee; and he cast away his garments, and arose, and came to him.* If you could but understand your own Mercies, you would throw away all Impediments to run after Jesus Christ; he stands still to receive you. Here are Convictions, Exhortations, and Strivings of the Spirit of God with you, and all to have you come to him. The Sufficiency of Christ swallows up all the wants and defects of the poor Soul. *Prov.* 3. 27, 28.

Withhold

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Withhold not good from them to whom it is due, when it is in the power of thine hand to do it. Say not unto thy Neighbour, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will give; when thou hast it by thee. If you may not deferre in giving, then how much less may you deferre when Christ offers you Grace and Mercy, an Alms in your starving state: Will you say to Christ, Go, and come again, and to morrow I will receive it? what a horrible pride is this for a Beggar to put it off, and say, Not now, but to morrow: now thou hast it by thee, but to morrow it may be far from thee.

Secondly, if thou dost delay to seek the Lord in the season thereof, thou sinnest against Divine Patience and Long-suffering. Cant. 5. 2. Open to me, my Sister, my Dove, my undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night. This Rain, and drops of the night, note Suffering, and waiting late. Jesus Christ he suffered, that he might save thee, and staves without doors long, canst thou finde in thy heart to keep him out longer? I will not all this move thee to open the door. Revd. 2. 21. I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not. Revd. 3. 20. I will cast her into a bed, and them that

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commit Adultery with her into great tribulation; except they repent of their deeds: If she leaves not the Bed of Security, she shall know the Bed of Anxiety. Hath not God given this Land and People-space, when he hath been about to destroy it with Drought, and otherwise by Sea and by Land, yet God hath forbore, and not presently destroy'd you: Wherefore? that you might repent. Again, Gods hand hath been lifted up on one or other of you in a Storm at Sea; and why? that you might repent. Sometime he hath visited you with Sickness, and yet spared you; was it not that you should repent? If you do not repent of your former delays and unkindnesses, God will lay you fall upon a Bed of Destruction. Hath not the Lord contended with other Nations, and you in this Land have had a Truce? and this is, that you may treat with him on terms of Amity: And now when God gives Truce to you, will you make War with God? *Rom. 2. 4.* Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath. The Lord doth not onely forbear to strike thee,

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thee, and pull back his hand, and there is long-suffering, forbearance a great deal and a great while; but stretcheth forth his hand in rich goodness, and shall all this riches be made little and light of by thee? It was given thee for Consolation, and wilt thou use it to Desolation and Wrath? in stead of goodness thou shalt have severity, and in stead of long-suffering thou shalt have sudden destruction.

The third Branch of this Motive is; It is an high Offence against the highest Love, when a Soul forbears to seek the Lord, when he offers himself to be found. There's none of you but will think you love the Lord, and it is pity he should live that doth not love Christ: if you delay and put off, certainly here is little love in your Soul. *Genes. 34. 18, 19. And their words pleased Hamor, and Shechem Hamors son: And the young man deferred not to do the thing; because he had delight in Jacobs daughter.* Here is a Match propounded betwixt the Son of God and thy Soul, if thou hadst a delight in the Son of God, thou wouldst not delay: it is evident you have no delight, because you do defer; if you would have the Lord Jesus, you must deny your self, your own righteousness and vanity: You cannot part with
B this

this and that evil; then you have no delight in the Son of God: But you except against the terms; Gain and Bargains they must be caught in the very time, in the very nick; you must not stand Shall I? Shall I? till the Market is done. *Ruth 3. 18. Then said she, Sit still my daughter, untill thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be at rest, untill he have finished the thing this day.* Hadst thou any love and desire kindled in thy Soul to Christ, thou wouldst not be at rest; if thy Soul were once engaged to Jesus Christ, all thy incomes would not give thee rest: A man is in debt, and here is no Surety but Jesus Christ; As an Emperour said to a Prodigal, *He wondred what Pillow he slept on;* it is a Pillow of the Devils stopping. Oh think how dearly Jesus Christ hath engaged you to love him. *Revel. 3. Behold, I stand at the door and knock:* What! Jesus Christ to stand without knocking and calling, till the dews of the evening fall upon him. How oughtest thou now to make haste? He knocks by Common Mercies, and Special Mercies, such and such Successes, and such Prosperity; will not all this provoke thee to get off from the Bed of Security, and to embrace him? How farre did Jesus Christ come to Redeem

Redeem thee? he came from Heaven to Earth to Redeem thee: Thou art undone, and thy Inheritance lost; and Christ thy Kinsman came to Redeem thee. He opens not his Purse for Silver and Gold, but he opens all the Veins of his heart to let out his heart-blood to Redeem thee, and thine Inheritance. *Lo, I come!* Shall not *Joseph* be made to run when he comes from the Dungeon? Remember those loud cries upon the Cross, and his thirsting upon the Cross; and he tells thee of it: and what was this for, but to save thy poor Soul? the cry of Christ that made the Earth to quake, and the Mountains to break, and will nothing move and break thy heart and persuade thee? It may be Jesus stands at the door, and in stead of opening the door, thou art driving him from the door; thou hast some churlish dog, some peevish Lust to drive him from the door; or thou hast some unclean Lust that maketh thee to stink, thy profane language, thy Atheistical thoughts, vain Conversation, are as so many stones thrown at him: it may be when Christ is at the door, thou liest a-bed, and that with thy unclean harlotry Lusts; thou hast dealt so with him many a long day: but before he goes he looks back, to see if thou wouldest

B 2 relent

relent a little, and return, and therefore once more he calls thee: be not at rest this night till thou hast done something about this Match, and closing with Christ: *Isai. 30.18. Therefore will the Lord wait that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you, for the Lord is a God of judgement: Blessed are all they that wait for him.*

Quest. Oh Sir, how gladly would I embrace this Exhortation; But I fear my time is past, and I have withstood my market; I am bid to seek while he may be found; yea, but it may be he will now not be found, and then in vain is all my seeking.

Ans. I Answer, 1. They that fear indeed the day of grace is over, give some ground of hope that the day of grace is not over, if it be a quickening fear: there is a fear that is contrary to hardness of heart, for one part of hardness of heart is to be without either fear or care; now if thou fearest lest the Sun should be set upon thy Soul, *Prov. 28.14. Happy is the man that feareth alway; but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief. Dunning hardness is contrary to fear. There is a sin unto death, and a sin that is not unto death: Some sins do necessarily include death and damnation; if thou concludest*

concludest that the day of grace is over, thou concludest as hard as if thou hadst committed the sin against the holy Ghost, and this a man cannot do, without he finally harden his heart. Now this is a sin unto death; there is death in the Understanding, in the Will and Affections: But now if thou hast a Soul-rowsing fear, thy day is not past.

Again, if thy fear be an honest laborious fear: *Psal. 104. 21, 22, 23. Man goeth forth to his work;* Art thou at it in the use of Means that thou mayest finde the Lord? then it is not Sun-set yet, but it is working-time, because thou art at work; the wilde beasts are gone to their dens, that is, those violent disorders that were in thy Soul, they are couched in their dens, that now thou dardest not walk and speak as thou didst. If a man have his day of grace over, he cannot cease to sin, but he will go on further and further, and will take all advantages to keep himself in a course of sinning. *Heb. 3.*

10. I was grieved with that generation, and said, They alwayes erre in their hearts. A man that hath his day of grace over, he is ever going out of the way, he alwayes erres in his heart, he hath no heart any more to return.

Secondly, if the Lord Jesus continue to call and to strive by his Spirit, hath God

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let thee alone? doth he say to all Means and Ordinances, Let that Soul alone? or dost thou finde the Lord come and rowse thee? then surely the day is not over: but when any Soul's day is over, then Christ leaves calling and knocking at the door. If now that Soul that hath resisted so long will yield, surely the day is not over: if there be a correspondency and eccho of thy Soul to the outward and inward Call of Jesus Christ, that is, thou wouldest fain do what thou art bid, and fain come when thou art called, certainly thy day is not over: *Psal. 27. 8. When thou saidest, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto the Lord, Thy face will I seek: so long the day is not over. Prov. 1. 28. Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not finde me: for that they hated knowledge, and did not chuse the fear of the Lord; they chose rather a loose and slight life: They would none of my counsell, they despised my reproof; as an Adulterer hates the light, that it should not come where he is: this man is likely to have his day over. But on whatever ground thou dost suspect that thy day is over, thou hast no warrant or command to make sure thy Reprobation; God calls thee to make sure*

sure thy Election, but he no way
to make sure thy Reprobation. *Eccl. 9. 1.*
To him that is joyned to all the living, there is
hope: it is to give him a hope of probability
if he use the Means. This is a certain
Rule, That if any one Scripture hinders
thee from seeking the face of God, that is
not managed by the Spirit of God, but by
the spirit of Envy and Malice: Whatever it
is that awakens thee, and makes thee look
about thee, that is good; but that which
quenches and damps all, that is of Satan.
Oh receive this word of Exhortation, and
the Lord while he may be found, calling thee,
while he is near.

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